

# The Washington State Part C System Improvement Project Stakeholder Meeting April 2010

## **Suggested Improvement Activities from Washington Stakeholders Summary**

Participants of this stakeholder meeting were asked to brainstorm what change activities would be needed to support providers in implementing effective practices in early intervention. Participants were asked to consider suggestions on improvement activities that would support a new mission and vision focusing on integrating child outcomes into the IFSP process and effective practices. Improvement activities were requested in the areas of: 1) state and local policies, procedures and guidelines; 2) funding; 3) technical assistance and training; and 4) monitoring. This document is a summary of this activity and represents the collective feedback of the participants in attendance.

### **State and Local Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

#### **Need For Statewide Forms**

Create statewide forms (i.e. due process, prior notice, consent, releases, intake, start of services) for consistent use.

#### **Clarify Funding Policy/Procedures (Interagency Coordination)**

Create consistent policies and procedures for funding Part C services. Specific areas to be addressed include state funds (DD, Medicaid, Local Lead Agency and School District funding) and insurance (including a clear policy for charging co-pays to families and determining financial hardship).

#### **Need Written Policy/Procedures All In One Place**

Create a policy and procedure manual for the Part C program (based on the federal regulations and new state guidance).

## **Need for Consistency Among LLAs While Maintaining Local Flexibility**

Create consistent policies, procedures and definitions to be used across all counties and in all local lead agencies, with provisions for flexibility in local implementation. Create a consistent name, mission and vision for the program. Create consistent definitions and terms to be used throughout the state (i.e. referral, EI services, financial hardship, natural environment justification). Establish state criteria for each LLA that provides oversight and guidance on issues such as catchment area.

## **Need to Clarify Procedures, Increase Interagency Coordination and Consistency**

Align policies and procedures with those of DD, the school districts and DEL. Provide guidance specifically to the school districts about Part C services. Investigate which policies DEL has that might impact early intervention. Align eligibility criteria between Part C and DD services.

## **Guidance for Practice**

Once policies and procedures are established, create guidance documents to support the implementation of identified areas of practice. These include but are not limited to natural environments justifications, informed clinical opinion, foster care and surrogate parents, service models, IFSP development and teaming. In addition, create documents that provide specific guidance to providers about:

- The provision of specialized therapies outside of the early intervention system
- The connection between eligibility determination and functional assessment and planning for infants and toddlers
- Integration of child outcomes into the IFSP process.

## **Implement Policies and Procedures**

Provide systematic dissemination of information with training and technical assistance to promote implementation of policies and procedures. For service providers (particularly Family Resources Coordinators), provide training on all policies to promote consistent implementation of the guidelines. For families, create a DVD on procedural safeguards.

## **Other Items Related to State and Local Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

- Consider reducing the number of Local Lead Agencies.
- Clarify the roles of FRC, LLA, and ICC.
- Collect more data for decision making.
- Provide guidelines on what is allowed for personnel shortages and filling in with supervision.

## **Funding**

### **Need to Increase Funding for ESIT**

Advocate and secure an increase in funding for ESIT through various local, state and federal sources. Create an allocation plan that considers the growth and size of areas.

### **Need More Consistent, Increased Coverage from Insurance**

Create a stronger connection between Part C services and private and public insurance to generate consistent coverage for early intervention services. To address the concern that insurance will not fund services in natural environments, create a crosswalk between the IFSP and insurance. Investigate the differences in authorization and reimbursement rates between private and public insurance, reducing co-pays for families, and ways for local agencies to manage the cost of processing information for insurance.

### **Concerns about School District (SD) Funding**

Create a consistent funding structure and guidelines for school district funds that support ESIT that includes consistent reimbursement for child-specific services and overhead costs and a structure for the flow of funding from OSPI to providers. Evaluate different ways to create a consistent flow of funds from the school districts to the ESIT program. Create a standard for how much the provider will be reimbursed per child by the school districts.

### **Need Equity in Funding Across LLAs & Counties**

Create and implement an equitable distribution formula to equalize funding for ESIT across the state. Eliminate funding silos and create consistent funding for Part C services from all sources that are available in all counties (i.e., DD funds).

### **Need Funding To Pay for Effective Practice In Natural Environment (Not Create Barriers To Desired Service Model)**

Create a funding structure that supports the provision of services in natural environments with particular focus on:

- Payment for services provided in natural environments
- Payment for travel time, meeting time and support services such as interpreters
- Payment for specific types of services (i.e., child mental health and services for children with autism)
- Payment for time spent preparing for the IFSP meeting (i.e., evaluation, assessment and eligibility determination)
- Payment for provider and parent training

## **Need a Cost Study**

Complete a cost study that examines all the sources of funding for early intervention services and provides a cost benefit analysis of providing early intervention services.

## **Other items related to Funding**

- Create clear definition of and guidance on financial hardship for families.
- Clarify the home health care license issue – DOH/ESIT/DEL.
- Create a practice guide on funding.
- Include information about funding in training for FRCs.
- Are there implications for DD funding that may accompany the move to DEL?

## **Training and Technical Assistance**

### **Create and Implement a Training Plan**

Create a statewide training and technical assistance plan to distribute and monitor the use of new policies and procedures. Training and technical assistance should be consistent across the state, be offered on an on-going basis, and be provided by knowledgeable trainers and technical assistance providers.

- Identify priorities for training of administrators, service providers, FRCs and families.
- Set statewide standards for competencies to be developed through training.
- Create a mechanism for training to be updated on an ongoing basis, particularly as changes in laws and regulations are made.

### **Use Multiple Methods and Venues**

Offer training and technical assistance through multiple methods, including but not limited to peer mentoring, coaching, online (or other electronic) means and train the trainer sessions.

### **Need Parent Training**

Create parent training materials to inform families of ESIT services, rights and safeguards, and policies and procedures.

### **Create Cross Agency Training**

Coordinate training efforts with other early childhood systems within the state, and create a system-wide training summary or calendar. Focus on statewide training priorities and the larger 0-5 system. Provide training to Part C and Part B providers together.

## **Content Ideas**

Create training materials that focus on content of the Seven Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments, including:

- Part C philosophy of service provision and best practices
- Service models, including primary service provider
- Teaming
- Integrating outcomes into the IFSP
- Developing functional IFSPs
- Collaborative transition planning
- Home visiting practices (including safety practices)
- Program requirements
- Outreach and public awareness to support child find

## **Monitoring**

### **Focus**

Create a monitoring system that is focused on compliance as well as the outcomes for children and families. Monitor the quality of IFSPs, the outcomes of services provided, practices from referral through transition, and staff competencies.

### **Methods**

Create a monitoring system that established a framework for expected practices, collects information at multiple levels, and provides information that supports individual and program improvement. Balance data that is collected in the process of delivering services with data that is measured outside of that context. Create a consistent communication mechanism between local and state level prior to monitoring events.

### **Communication/Sharing Information**

Create a communication plan to disseminate the results of monitoring in a meaningful, usable way. Publish data on performance at all levels, and share strategies for the resolution of issues so can be implemented across the state. Use data collected from monitoring to inform program improvement, enhance the statewide training plan, and to identify gaps or duplication in services.

### **Data System and Needs**

Evaluate and update the data system to ensure that it includes all needed data, is accessible to all, and provides concrete data to inform system practice. Consider tracking what happens to children after they leave ESIT and collect data that demonstrates the effectiveness of services longitudinally. Streamline data entry to make it less cumbersome on those that use the system.

### **Data Validity/ Reliability**

Create policies and procedures for consistent data collection and data entry. Create consistent definitions for data input, including date of referral, natural environment, and exceptional family circumstances.

### **Procedural Guidance Needed**

Create a statewide monitoring policies and procedures manual, guidance documents, and monitoring forms for implementation across the state. Provide clarity to the role of the LLA, the state lead agency and subcontractors for monitoring procedures.